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ABSTRACT

A self-instructional program in the French subjunctive mood is organized by categories of verbs requiring the subjunctive. Within each category, directions are given for using the verbs, and exercises are prescribed with sample sentences. The exercises consist of pattern drills and translations. A post-test is included. (MSE)

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SUBJUNCTIVE PROGRAM

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SUBJUNCTIVE PROGRAM:

INTRODUCTION:

The subjunctive mood is sometimes called the mood of doubt or emotion. You will learn six categories of verbs and expressions which will require the following verb to be put in the subjunctive in French.

Example of a sentence with a verb of doubt or emotion using the subjunctive:

I (am delighted) (emotion) she (is) (subjunctive) here!
He (doubts) (doubt) that I (understand) (subjunctive).

I (prefer) (emotion) that he (be) (subjunctive) on time.
("he be" is subjunctive even in English - you may not have realized it!)

In the following sentences, pick out the verb or expression of doubt or emotion.

1. He loves me to sing.	1. (loves)
2. She is not sure I understand.	2. (is not sure)
3. They fear I am late.	3. (fear)

In these sentences, pick out the verb which will go into the subjunctive. (Remember it is the verb <u>following</u> the verb of doubt or emotion!)

4. He is glad I like him.	4. (like)
5. She fears I am not listening.	5. (listening)
6. He hates me to cry!	6. (cry)

You will learn a large number of verbs and expressions which require the subjunctive. They are organized into categories to make them easier to understand and remember. The first category is called "verbs of wishing or wanting". They are:

vouloir, desirer - to wish, want, desire
souhaiter - to wish
aimer mieux, préférer - to prefer
aimer - to love, to like

SUBJUNCTIVE PROGRAM:

In the following sentences, pick out the verb of wishing or wanting, and then tell which verb in the sentence will go into the subjunctive in French.

Example: He doesn't like me to cry.

a) like (verb of wishing)
b) cry (verb in subj.)

7. I want him to study.	7. a) want (verb-wishing) b) study (subjunctive)
8. She wishes I would leave.	8. a) wishes (wishing) b) leave (subjunctive)
9. He prefers that I smile.	9. a) prefers (wishing) b) smile (subjunctive)

The mere presence of a verb of wishing or wanting does not automatically call for the subjunctive. The subjunctive is used only when the second verb has a different "subject" from the first verb.

Example: I want him to learn.

In this sentence, the person (subject) who will learn is not the same person (subject) who wants. The verb learn will therefore be in the subjunctive.

In the following group pick out two different people in each sentence. [They will both become "subjects" in French— see #17] →

10. I wish she would sing.	10. I, she
11. He prefers me to answer.	11. He, me
12. I don't like her to scold.	12. I, her

If there is not a change in subject between the first verb and the second verb, the second verb will be in the infinitive form instead of the subjunctive.

EXamples: I want to learn.
Je veux apprendre.
He wishes to leave.
Il souhaite partir.
We prefer to listen.
Nous préférons écouter.

Using what you know about subject changes tell whether the underlined verb in these sentences should be put into the subjunctive or the infinitive form in French:

13. He wants to <u>sing</u>.	13. infinitive
14. She wants him to <u>sing</u>.	14. subjunctive
15. We like you to <u>listen</u>.	15. subjunctive
16. He prefers to <u>speak</u> alone.	16. infinitive
17. She wishes he would <u>agree</u>.	17. subjunctive

If you re-arrange the English sentence, adding the word "that" (que) it will be much easier to translate any sentence requiring the subjunctive into French.

Example: "I want him to study." can be re-arranged in English to read:

"I want that he study."

"He wants me to sing." can be re-arranged to read:
"He wants that I sing."

Re-arrange the following sentences in English to make them easier to translate if there are two subjects. If there is only one subject, there's no need to re-arrange!

18. I want her to sing.	18. I want that she sing.
19. She loves me to sing.	19. She loves that I sing.
20. She wants to sing.	20. No change in subject!!!
21. They prefer him to study.	21. They prefer that he study.
22. They want to study.	22. No change in subject!!!

Try translating the following sentences into French. On the first blank, re-arrange the sentence in <u>English</u> if possible to make translation easier.
Underline the Verb in the English sentence that will go into the subjunctive when you translate to French. Check the English answer before you go on to translate into French on the next line.

Example: I want him to sing.

A. I want that he <u>sing</u>.

B. Je veux qu'il chante.

23. We want her to go.	23.a) We want that she go. b) Nous voulons qu'elle aille.
24. He prefers me to wait.	24.a) He prefers that I wait. b) Il préfère que j'attende.
25. She wishes to study.	25. No change in subject, —use infinitive instead of subjunctive! Elle veut étudier.
26. I like her to be on time.	26.a) I like that she be on time. b) J'aime qu'elle soit à l'heure.

If you got the last four sentences correct, skip over numbers 27-29. If not, you need more practice! Try these:

27. They want me to understand.	27. They want that I understand. Ils veulent que je comprenne.
28. He prefers her to know the answer.	28. He prefers that she know the answer. Il préfère qu'elle sache la réponse.
29. He prefers to leave early.	29. No change in subject! Il préfère partir tôt.

Now that you know the basic ground rules, you are ready to try some subjunctives from the second category, called "expressions of will".

avoir l'intention - to intend
défendre, interdire - to forbid
exiger - to demand
permettre - to allow
prier - to beg
ordonner - to order

Continue to re-arrange the English sentence before you try to translate into French, and underline the verb in English that you will make subjunctive.

30. I forbid her to go out.	30. I forbid that she go out. Je défends qu'elle sorte.
31. He orders me to be quiet.	31. He orders that I be quiet. Il ordonne que je me taise.
32. I allow them to play.	32. I allow that they play. Je permets qu'ils jouent.

SUBJUNCTIVE PROGRAM:

Remember that the verbs of the category "expressions of will" can be translated using an infinitive. They will be followed by "de" if they take an infinitive.

Example: He asks to speak.
Il demande de parler.

She intends to stay.
Elle a l'intention de rester.

Translate these directly into French:

33. I intend to wait.	33. J'ai l'intention de rester.
34. They ask to play with us.	34. Ils demandent de jouer avec nous.

Notice also that if the expression of will takes a person as an object, that person will be an indirect object. This is a way to avoid the subjunctive construction entirely!

Example: He allows his daughter to leave.
Il permet à sa fille de partir.

She asks the class to work.
Elle demande à la classe de travailler.

We order him to work.
Nous lui ordonnons de travailler.

In the following English sentences, underline the indirect object with one line and the verb to go into the infinitive with two lines.

35. She forbids the class to speak.	35. She forbids the class to speak.
36. We beg her to sing.	36. We beg her to sing.
37. I order Mary to leave.	37. I order Mary to leave.

Now translate these same sentences into French. The indirect object and the infinitive are already underlined to guide you!

38. She forbids the class to speak.	38. Elle défend à la classe de parler.
39. We beg her to sing.	39. Nous lui prions de chanter.
40. I order Mary to leave.	40. J'ordonne à Mary de partir.

Have you noticed that it is sometimes possible to translate sentences from this group two different ways? One way uses the infinitive and an indirect object, the other way uses the subjunctive.

Examples: She asks me to leave.

a) Elle me demande de partir.
b) Elle demande que je parte.

He allows the girl to leave.

a) Il permet à la fille de partir.
b) Il permet que la fille parte.

Both ways are correct, but the sentences using the subjunctive are slightly more formal or stiff sounding.

Translate the following sentences both ways. First use the method with the infinitive and the indirect object, Then use the subjunctive construction in the second translation.

41. Her mother allows Mary to choose.	41. Sa mère permet à Mary de choisir Sa mère permet que Mary choisisse.
42. The teacher orders the class to work.	42. Le professeur ordonne à la classe de travailler. Le professeur ordonne que la classe travaille.
43. He forbids her to smoke.	43. Il lui défend de fumer. Il défend qu'elle fume.
44. We ask her to finish.	44. Nous lui demandons de finir. Nous demandons qu'elle finisse.

The third category of verbs and expressions which require the subjunctive are called "Verbs and expressions of emotion." (fear, shame, surprise, pleasure, etc) Here is a fairly complete list:

craindre, avoir peur	-	to fear, be afraid
douter	-	to doubt
avoir honte	-	to be ashamed
être content, heureux	-	to be happy
être ravi, enchanté	-	to be delighted
être triste	-	to be sad
être inquiet	-	to be worried
être fâché	-	to be angry, annoyed, embarrassed
être surpris, étonné	-	to be surprised, astonished

The wording in this group stays very much the same from English to French. All you need to remember is the word "que" (that) which does not always appear in English, but which must appear in French. Translate these directly to French, and underline the verb in your French sentence that is in the subjunctive form.

45. I'm sorry that you are not happy.	45. Je regrette que vous ne soyez pas heureux.
46. He is surprised that we are drinking	46. Il est étonné que nous buvions.
47. They are glad I can go.	47. Ils sont contents que je puisse aller.

Like the expressions of "will", all the expressions of "emotion" require "de" if they are followed by an infinitive.

Examples: She's ashamed to cry.
Elle a honte de pleurer.

I'm afraid to study.
J'ai peur d'étudier.

He's delighted to see you.
Il est ravi de vous voir.

Now translate these:

48. He is afraid to leave.	48. Il a peur de partir.
49. I am annoyed to learn that!	49. Je suis fâché d'apprendra ça.
50. She's astonished to see him.	50 Elle est étonnée de le voir.
51. Are they sorry to be here?	51. Regrettent-ils d'être ici?

You may be puzzled to notice that some sentences that seem to call for the subjunctive are in the future in English. These verbs will go into the present subjunctive when they are translated into French!

Examples: I am glad she will come. (future!)
Je suis content qu'elle vienne. (present subjunctive)

I am sorry he will not be here. (future!)
Je regrette qu'il ne soit pas ici. (pres. subjunctive)

Translate these:

52. I am surprised that he will not come.	52. Je suis étonnée qu'il ne vienne pas.

53. We are sad that she will not play.	53. Nous sommes tristes qu'elle ne joue pas.
54. Are you worried that I will not be on time?	54. Etes-vous inquiet que je ne sois pas à l'heure?

Certain verbs and expressions require the following subjunctive form to be accompanied by the word "ne." * (It looks just like the first half of the negative "ne...pas"). This "ne" is called a "pleonastic ne" in French. It has no meaning, but you must put it in the sentence.

(* sometimes French people don't use this "ne"!)

Example: He is afraid I am coming.
Il a peur que je ne vienne.

She fears I am late.
Elle craint que je ne sois en retard.

(Of course, negative sentences already have this, so you don't need another one!)

Example: He's afraid I won't come.
Il a peur que je ne vienne pas.

In the category of "emotion" only the verbs "craindre" and "avoir peur" require the pleonastic "ne". Add the "ne" to these sentences in the proper place:

[4 others are listed on page 13 →
1) de peur que 3) à moins que
2) de crainte que 4) avant que]

55. Il craint que je vienne.	55. Il craint que je ne vienne.
56. J'ai peur qu'elle soit en retard.	56. J'ai peur qu'elle ne soit en retard.

TRANSLATE THESE:

57. He's afraid I will stay.	57. Il a peur que je ne reste.
58. They fear he will be sad.	58. Ils craignent qu'il ne soit triste.

The next category requiring the subjunctive is called "impersonal expressions". They are:

il se peut, il est possible	- it is possible
il est impossible	- it is impossible
il vaut mieux, il vaudrait mieux	- it is better, it would be better
il est important	- it is important
il est temps	- it is time
il est fâcheux	- it is troublesome, annoying
* c'est dommage	- it is a shame, a pity
il est bon (mauvais)	- it is good (bad)
il est étonnant, surprenant	- it is surprising, astonishing
il est naturel	- it is natural
il est juste	- it is fair

Some of these are very easy to translate into French using the rules you know so far for the subjunctive. Try these:

59. It is possible that she will come.	59. Il est possible qu'elle vienne.
60. It is not fair that he be late.	60. Il n'est pas juste qu'il soit en retard.
61. It is important that you learn fast.	61. Il est important que vous appreniez vite.

Sometimes the English sentence will be constructed using the word "for". In these cases, it might be better to change the English wording before you translate.

Examples: It is important for her to understand.

Reworded: It is important that she understand.
Il est important qu'elle comprenne.

It is not possible for her to be on time.

Reworded: It is not possible that she be on time.
Il n'est pas possible qu'elle soit à l'heure.

Try these. Re-write the English and check your answer before you translate to French.

62. It is natural for her to want money.	62. It is natural that she want money. Il est naturel qu'elle veuille de l'argent.
63. It is important for her to know the answer.	63. It is important that she know the answer. Il est important qu'elle sache la réponse.
64. It is good for her to learn French.	65. It is good that she learn French. Il est bon qu'elle apprenne le français.

The expressions "il faut" and "il est nécessaire" can sometimes be expressed in English using "for", as above,:

"It is necessary (for) her to understand."

or sometimes be expressed in English using the verb "has to" or "have to":

She (has to) understand.

Both of these versions in English are translated the same way in French:

"Il faut qu'elle comprenne" (or "Il est nécessaire. qu'elle comprenne)

Now translate these into French:

65. We have to arrive on time!	65. Il faut que nous arrivions à l'heure.
66. It is necessary for them to finish on time.	66. Il est nécessaire qu'ils finissent à l'heure.
67. She has to study tonight.	67. Il faut qu'elle étudie ce soir.
68. It is necessary for you to go!	68. Il est nécessaire que vous alliez.

Both expressions "il faut que" and "il est nécessaire" can use the subjunctive as you have seen, or they can be constructed with an indirect object and an infinitive like the verbs of the second category (expressions of will).

Examples: It is necessary for her to study.

her - will become the indirect object
study - will go into the infinitive

Il lui est nécessaire d'étudier.
or
Il lui faut étudier.

(Remember that "il est nécessaire" requires "de" before an infinitive, but "il faut" does not!)

Practice translating these sentences both ways. First, use the infinitive construction. Then translate again, using the subjunctive construction.

(il faut and il est nécessaire are synonymous)

69. It is necessary for them to go downtown.	69. Il leur est nécessaire d'aller en ville. (Il leur faut aller en ville.) Il est nécessaire qu'ils aillent en ville. (Il faut qu'ils aillent en ville).
70. It is necessary for him to drink.	70. Il lui est nécessaire de boire. (Il lui faut boire) Il est nécessaire qu'il boive. (Il faut qu'il boive).
71. She has to see the doctor.	71. Il lui est nécessaire de voir le médecin. (Il lui faut voir le médecin.) Il est nécessaire qu'elle voie le médecin. (Il faut qu'elle voie le médecin).

SUBJUNCTIVE PROGRAM:

If you know the passé composé construction and can put the auxiliary verbs "avoir" and "être" into the subjunctive forms, then you can do the "passé composé" in the subjunctive also! Here are two conjugations of verbs in the "passé composé du subjonctif" to serve as examples:

parler	aller
que j'aie parlé	que je sois allé
que tu aies parlé	que tu sois allé
qu'il ait parlé	qu'il soit allé
qu'elle ait parlé	qu'elle soit allée
que nous ayons parlé	que nous soyons allés
que vous ayez parlé	que vous soyez allé(s)
qu'ils aient parlé	qu'ils soient allés
qu'elles aient parlé	qu'elles soient allées

Study these examples of sentences using the "passé composé du subjonctif."

I am happy that she spoke.
Je suis content qu'elle ait parlé.

It is a shame that they didn't come.
C'est dommage qu'ils ne soient pas venus.

She's annoyed that he didn't understand.
Elle est fâchée qu'il n'ait pas compris.

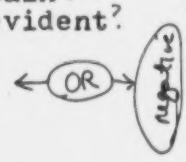
Now try translating these yourself:

72. We are delighted that you sang.	72. Nous sommes ravis que vous ayez chanté.
73. He's ashamed that she said that.	73. Il a honte qu'elle ait dit ça.
74. It's good that they left.	74. Il est bon qu'ils soient partis.
75. Is it possible they didn't wait?	75. Est-il possible qu'ils n'aient pas attendu?

The fifth category requiring the subjunctive will only do so certain cases. Here is the list:

croire - to believe neg. & interrogative
penser - to think " "
espérer - to hope " "

interrogative:
est-il certain (sûr)? - is it sure, certain?
est-il évident? - is it obvious, evident?
est-il clair? - is it clear?
est-il vrai? - is it true?
est-il probable? - is it probable?



Il n'est pas certain...
Il n'est pas evident...
Il n'est pas clair...
Il n'est pas vrai...
Il n'est pas probable...

The above expressions and verbs will only take the subjunctive when they are negative or interrogative! (These are the times when they express doubt!)

Examples: I don't think she's coming. (negative)
Je ne pense pas qu'elle vienne.

Is it probable he will not do that job? (interrogative)
Est-il probable qu'il ne fasse pas ce travail

It is not certain they will go. (negative)
Il n'est pas certain qu'ils y aillent.

Translate the underlined portion of these sentences:

76. Does she believe <u>that he will come</u>?	76. qu'il vienne?
77. It is not clear <u>that he understands</u>.	77. qu'il comprenne.
78. Is it true <u>that she knows him</u>?	78. qu'elle le connaisse?

Don't forget that these verbs and expressions only take the subjunctive when they are in the negative or interrogative! They will take the indicative if they are <u>positive</u> or <u>negative-interrogative</u>.

Examples: I think she arrived. (positive)
Je crois qu'elle est arrivée. (indicative)

I don't think she arrived. (negative)
Je ne crois pas qu'elle soit arrivée. (subjunctive)

It is clear they are guilty. (positive)
Il est clair qu'ils sont coupables. (indicative)

Is it clear they are guilty? (Interrogative)
Est-il clair qu'ils soient coupables? (subjunctive)

Don't you think he will come? (Negative-interrogative)
Ne penses-tu pas qu'il viendra? (indicative)

Remember that it is the <u>first</u> verb in the sentence (from the list of special cases) that determines the subjunctive. Therefore, you must look to see if the <u>first</u> verb is negative, interrogative, etc, and not the <u>second</u> verb!

In the following sentences, first indicate if the initial verb is positive, negative, interrogative, or negative-interrogative. Then tell whether the sentence requires the subjunctive or the indicative for the second verb.

79. It is certain she will understand.	79. a) positive b) indicative
80. I don't think she will hear.	80. a) negative b) subjunctive
81. I think she will not hear.	81. a) positive b) indicative
82. Do you think she will hear?	82. a) interrogative b) subjunct.

83. Don't you think she will hear?	83. a) negative-interrogative b) indicative
84. It is probable that she will hear.	84. a) positive b) indicative
85. It is not true that she will hear.	85. a) negative b) subjunctive

Translate some of these yourself. First tell whether the first verb is positive, negative, interrogative, or negative-interrogative. Then put the sentence into French.

86. Does he think she will go there?	86. a) interrogative b) Pense-t-il qu'elle y aille?
87. It is certain that she will know.	87. a) positive b) Il est certain qu'elle saura.
88. It is not clear that she will do it.	88. a) negative b) Il n'est pas clair qu'elle le fasse.
89. Don't you hope she will see it?	89. a) Negative-interrogative b) N'espères-tu pas qu'elle le verra?

The sixth and last category requiring the subjunctive is a slightly different type of group. This group is made up of conjunctions:

afin que, pour que - so that, in order that
bien que, quoique - although
sans que - without
jusqu'à ce que - until
pourvu que - provided that

four of these conjunctions require a pleonastic ne also:

avant que (+ne) - before
à moins que (+ne) - unless
de peur que, de crainte que (+ne) for fear that

The rules about subject changes that you have studied for the other groups are harder to see here. The easiest thing to remember is that you must use the subjunctive in this group if there is a <u>different subject</u> with a <u>verb</u> <u>after</u> the conjunction.

Here are some examples of these conjunctions with and without the subjunctive compared:

with (2 different) people	one person
I'll leave before he knows it. Je partirai avant qu'il le sache.	I'll leave before knowing it. Je partirai avant de le savoir
I'll study until he leaves. J'étudierai jusqu'à ce qu'il parte.	I'll study until tomorrow. J'étudierai jusqu'à demain.

SUBJUNCTIVE PROGRAM:

In the following sentences using these conjunctions, tell whether the subjunctive will be required or not. If it <u>is</u> required, tell the subject and verb that will go into the subjunctive.

Examples: He studies without her knowing it.
a) subjunctive required
b) "her" "knowing"

90. He will never finish unelss she does the work.	90. a) subjunctive req ired b) "she" "does"
91. She is staying home for fear it will rain.	91. a) subjunctive required b) "it" "rain"
92. He left without her knowing it.	92. a) subjunctive required b) "her" "knowing"
93. He left without her.	93. a) no subjunctive b) there is no 2nd verb!
94. Without knowing it, she dropped her purse.	94. a) no subjunctive b) there is no subject change.
95. We will wait until it is sunny.	95. a) subjunctive required b) "it" "is sunny"
96. We will wait until later.	96d a) no subjunctive b) no subject change.

Now translate the following sentences (the underlined part only) into French:

97. I am meeting her <u>so we can talk</u>.	97. afin que nous puissions parler.
98. <u>Although she is pretty</u>, she is not intelligent.	98. bien qu'elle soit jolie
99. I will not leave <u>until he arrives</u>.	99. jusqu'à ce qu'il arrive.
100. She left <u>without his noticing it</u>.	100. sans qu'il le remarque.
101. She left <u>without speaking</u>.	101. sans parler (did you notice that "parler" has no subject?)
102. We will wait <u>until he comes</u>.	102. jusqu'à ce qu'il vienne.
103. She will wait <u>until tomorrow</u>.	103. jusqu'à demain.

A. Replace the dash with the correct form of the verb in parentheses:

1. Il ne veut pas que je ..... (faire) cela.
2. Voulez-vous que je .....(tenir) cette chaise?
3. Elle craint que Marie ..... (aller) avec elle.
4. Faut-il qu'elle .....(finir) le travail?
5. Il faut ..... (finir) cette leçon.
6. Je ne crois pas qu'elle.....(être) ici.
7. Il est probable qu'elle.....(partir) déjà.
8. Attendez jusqu'à ce que tu .....(choisir) le cadeau.
9. Elle reste au lit pour qu'elle ..... (être -negative) fatiguée.
10. Il travaille sans qu'elle le .....(savoir).

B. Translate these sentences into French.

1. I have to go to school today!

2. She is afraid I will be late.

3. Although we are tired, we work very hard.

4. It is not possible that he is here.

5. Let's wait until it is sunny out.

6. He works so that his family will be able to live.

7. He prefers that she drink milk.

8. I'm sorry that she said that.

9. I hope she will stay with me.

10. Do you doubt that your teacher is excellent?

C. Check your answers on the next page.

A.

1. fasse
2. tienne
3. n'aille
4. finisse
5. finir
6. soit
7. est déjà partie
8. choisisses
9. ne soit pas
10. sache

B.

1. Il faut que j'aille à l'école aujourd'hui.
   (Il me faut aller à l'école aujourd'hui.)
2. Elle a peur que je ne sois en retard.
3. Bien que nous soyons fatigués, nous travaillons beaucoup.
4. Il n'est pas possible qu'il soit ici.
5. Attendons jusqu'à ce qu'il fasse du soleil.
6. Il travaille pour que sa famille puisse vivre.
7. Il préfère qu'elle boive du lait.
8. Je regrette qu'elle ait dit cela.
9. J'espère qu'elle restera avec moi.
10. Doutez-vous que votre professeur soit excellent?